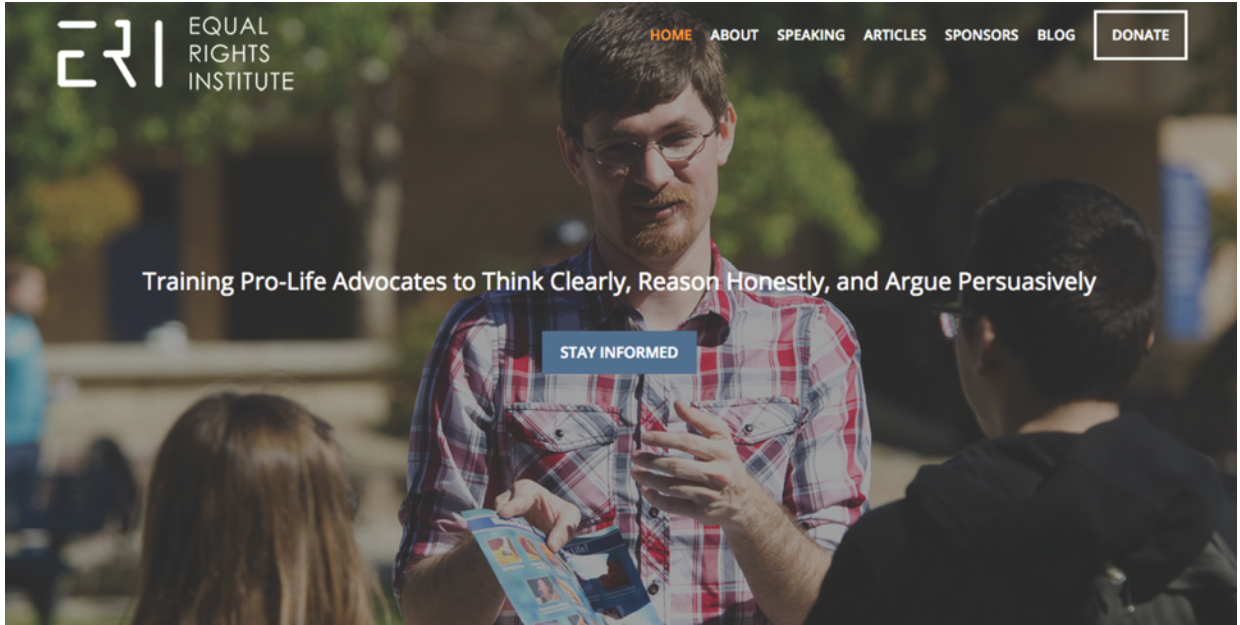


We did a major redesign to our website this month, and it looks fantastic. Check it out!



As you may already know, we moved from sending monthly newsletters to quarterly newsletters in June. We made the change because we found ourselves spending too much of our time writing newsletters about our work instead of doing our work. We were a bit nervous at first, but it has been really encouraging to hear from so many people how much they support and even appreciate that decision. Not writing newsletters in July and August allowed us to accomplish far more than we would have otherwise. Here's a quick recap:

Training the Students for Life staff.

I flew to Washington, D.C. in the last week of July to facilitate one of my favorite annual training events: Working with Students for Life of America's new Regional Coordinators. These young and professional pro-life people spend their time on the road, helping start new high school and campus clubs and coach those that already exist, as well as provide them with outreach opportunities. These are some of the most strategically placed pro-life advocates in the country, so we're always thrilled to train them in apologetics so they can pass our dialogue methods and arguments to their clubs.

Preparing for our Fall outreach

Jacob Nels has been busy working with the Students for Life clubs at the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. We will be training them both in a seminar on Saturday, September 19th, and we'll facilitate an outreach with them on the following Monday and Tuesday. These students are on fire. I had the privilege of meeting several of them at the National Students for Life Conference last January, and I was immediately impressed by their passion and desire to become better equipped to engage the pro-choice students on their campuses.

We decided to do only one campus outreach this Fall so that we can spend the bulk of our time developing the training course and raising the funds we need to be sustainable.

New logo and website

As you may have already noticed at the top left of this page, we finally have a real logo! When we launched ERI I created a basic website and logo so that we could focus on more urgent tasks like developing our training materials. We knew they

wouldn't be permanent. Any good businessman knows the importance of clearly communicating who you are to your audience. Figuring out how to connect to current college students about abortion is one of our greatest strengths, so it's important for us to communicate with our branding that we are forward-thinking.

Our new branding will also help us show that we're a pro-life training organization worthy of speaking at a national level. It will establish trust with potential donors who want to see that we're professionals who aren't going anywhere, and who can accomplish our goals.

Assembling a Board of Advisors

Before Tim and I launched ERI, our single, greatest concern was that we are both young, talented, passionate, but young. After about a month of thinking and praying about that problem, we committed to surrounding ourselves with the wisest people we knew who had more experience than us, or else we wouldn't do this at all. Taking that approach from the very beginning has been immeasurably valuable.

This advisory board is different than our Board of Directors, who meet quarterly to provide accountability, go over our financial reports, solve problems and make the decisions that only a Board of Directors can make. In contrast, the members of the Board of Advisors will meet with me one-on-one at least once a year. I will talk about our vision for the next year and ask them for their thoughts, advice, and critiques. I'll be asking questions like, "What pitfalls should we be looking for?" and "Are there major opportunities that we're missing?"

I've purposefully put together an advisory board of people whose advice I not only respect, but who have a diverse set of experiences and areas of expertise. By having all of these people speaking into what we're doing on an ongoing basis, I'm confident that we can direct Equal Rights Institute into becoming the best that it can be. You can see the list of people on both boards on the right. You can also learn more about them by reading their bios on the Staff page of our website, EqualRightsInstitute.com.

Research and Preparation for the Course

Tim has spent much of the last few months preparing our content for our online training course, including reading what he describes as several of the toughest philosophy books he's ever read. Before recommending an argument to our students, we take care to think through the counter-arguments. We're making some updates to the way we respond to certain advanced personhood arguments, while still making our material teachable to non-philosophy students. It's a huge project, but we're very close to finalizing our training material.

Raising the funds we need to produce the online training course.

In our last newsletter we announced our major project of the year: producing a scalable, online training course to help pro-life advocates in the areas of practical

dialogue tips and rigorous philosophy. This course will be a game-changer, as it will provide the best opportunity pro-life student clubs have ever had to get dialogue training outside of having a group physically come to their campus. As we explained in June, nobody can get to all the clubs though. That's why we're creating this course. You can learn more about the specifics by going to EqualRightsInstitute.com/Course.

Unfortunately, we haven't yet raised the funds we need to produce this course. In fact, we've only raised 35% of our operating costs for the rest of the year. More experienced fundraisers have told me that we're actually doing really well given that we've only existed for just over a year. We need to be in a sustainable place before we move forward with huge projects like the course, so we've pushed our goal of publishing to later next year.

If you're excited about the work we're doing to help pro-life advocates to love people better and make more persuasive arguments, please partner with us financially. Funding is the primary thing holding us back from pursuing the projects that will have the greatest impact. If you've given before, thank you so much for being one of the first people to make our work possible.

If you've never given before, this is the perfect time. **Several generous donors have set up a matching grant, to be applied to gifts from new donors, AND special gifts from past/current donors.** Please pray about the role your family could have in training thousands of pro-life advocates next year!

It's very easy to give online. All you have to do is visit EqualRightsInstitute.com/Donate. Thank you so much for standing with us!

ERI Board of Directors

Josh Brahm

David Conley, CPA
Smith, Conley & Associates

Phil Friesen,
Citadel Ministries

Nathan Hitchens

Alice Witt, LCSW

ERI Board of Advisors

David Bereit,
40 Days for Life

Nick Bradley,
First Baptist Church of Clovis

Kristi Burkhart,
Fresno Pregnancy Care Center

Dr. Charles Camosy,
Fordham University

Shawn Carney,
40 Days for Life

Rebekah Chiew,
Students for Life of America

David Hacker,
Alliance Defending Freedom

Dr. Craig Hazen,
Biola University

Kelsey Hazzard,
Secular Pro-Life

Trent Horn,
Catholic Answers

Walter Hoye,
Issues4Life

Scott Klusendorf,
Life Training Institute

Fr. Frank Pavone,
Priests for Life

Jojo Ruba,
Faith Beyond Belief

Alan Shlemon,
Stand to Reason

Steve Wagner,
Justice For All

ERI Blog Update

As we announced in May, we've moved to a quarterly newsletter that will focus on what we've been doing lately in the organization, and where we're headed. Many people have said they enjoy the practical articles we used to feature in our newsletters, and we're publishing those on a weekly basis at blog.EqualRightsInstitute.com. Some recent titles include:

- ▶ [Abortion Images: A Case for Disagreement without Division](#)
- ▶ [Be Open to Letting the Conversation Change Topics](#)
- ▶ [A Simple Change That Instantly Communicates a Nuanced Approach to the Abortion Debate](#)
- ▶ [Why Even Thomson's Violinist Condemns Planned Parenthood's Selling Baby Parts](#)
- ▶ [Don't Be Too Nice](#)
- ▶ [When a Hypothetical Story Isn't Hypothetical After All](#)
- ▶ [What We Learned in CMP's Fifth and Worst Video Yet](#)
- ▶ [Outrage, Disgust, and Grief are Proper Emotional Responses](#)
- ▶ [Summarizing the Strongest Evidence That Planned Parenthood is Selling, Not Donating](#)
- ▶ [Why Rhonda Changed Her Mind About Whether to Use the Word "Pro-Choice"](#)
- ▶ [How Should Pro-Lifers Think About Post-Abortive Shame?](#)
- ▶ [Memorized and Meaningless? A Fresh Look at 1 Corinthians 13](#)

Please check them out and share your favorite post with your friends on Facebook!

Avoiding an Embarrassingly Common Pro-Life Mistake

By Timothy Brahm

Almost every time in the last year I've talked with pro-choice students at a pro-life outreach, I've had an exchange that goes something like this:

Pro-Choice Student: The fetus isn't even a person.

Tim: We agreed earlier that a newborn is a person. Do you think a fetus is a person right before birth?

Pro-Choice Student: *sigh* I know where you're going with this, you're going to try to trap me by asking if it's a person right before that, or right before that.

Tim: No! I'm so glad you said that because that gives me the opportunity to clarify. The argument you're describing is a logical fallacy, it's one of the worst pro-life arguments I've ever heard, and if any pro-lifer out here makes that argument, I'll prove them wrong on your behalf. I'm not trying to trap you, I'm just trying to figure out what your position is. What is it that makes us persons?

Unfortunately, because of how common this pro-life mistake is, the pro-choice student is expecting our conversation to go something like this:

Pro-Choice: The fetus isn't a person.

Pro-Life: When do you think it becomes a person?

C: It isn't a person until it can think.

L: So would you say it's a person at birth?

C: Sure, it can think at birth.

L: Well, how about the day before it's born?

C: I don't know, maybe.

L: How about the day before that?

C: I think I see where this is going...

L: And how about the day before that? You just have to push back a little at a time to prove that there isn't a difference between a newborn and a fetus. If the newborn is human, and there isn't any big change in any day of its development, then it must have been human at the beginning.

C: Well I think there's a big difference between the day it can think and the day before that.

L: Okay, then let's talk about the day it can think. How about one second before that? The difference in the fetus from second to second is miniscule. So how can you say it is not human one second and human the next?

C: I don't know how to explain it but I'm not persuaded.

While making what sounds to some pro-life ears like a very persuasive and reasonable argument, the pro-life person in this example has fallen into a logical fallacy called the Continuum Fallacy, more commonly known as the fallacy of the heap or the fallacy of the beard. This fallacy takes place when you attempt to demonstrate that two states cannot be distinct because there is a continuum of states between them.

That might be confusing. Stay with me, I'll explain with a very easy-to-understand example.

In my opinion, the easiest way to understand why a type of reasoning is fallacious is to see that reasoning applied to something more obvious, and then see the consequences. Let's apply the same continuum reasoning to President Lincoln's beard:

Continued on back page...

Beard Believer: Lincoln obviously has a beard.

Beard Skeptic: Oh really?! When do you think a beard becomes a beard?

Beard Believer: I'm not sure. Certainly it's a beard when it's an inch long.

Beard Skeptic: Well, what if he expertly trimmed his beard down by one millimeter? Would he still be furry enough to qualify as "bearded?"

Beard Believer: Yeah, sure, I guess.

Beard Skeptic: What about one more millimeter?

Beard Believer: Yeah...

Beard Skeptic: And what about one more millimeter?

Beard Believer: I think I know where you're going with this...

Beard Skeptic: And one more millimeter after that? What if he's down to stubble? What if we remove the stubble and now

he's clean-shaven? Unless you can clearly delineate the exact moment Lincoln no longer has a beard, and give an argument for why that moment is not simply arbitrarily chosen, we must conclude that there is NO difference between Lincoln's beard in this picture and a clean-shaven woman! Therefore if Lincoln has a beard, EVERYONE, MAN OR WOMAN, HAS A BEARD!!!

If you aren't familiar with the continuum fallacy, it's awfully hard to argue with the skeptic's conclusion. But of course we know that Lincoln has a beard and we know that if someone is clean-shaven, they don't have a beard. We know that even if we aren't sure exactly how much facial hair one must have in order to qualify as having a beard, we generally know one when we see it. Just because there are some cases when it isn't obvious whether a given person is bearded, that doesn't mean we cannot ever recognize the difference between a bearded person and a non-bearded person.

Similarly, it doesn't follow that because a pro-choice person cannot determine where the dividing line is between a

valuable human infant and (in her mind) a non-valuable human zygote, that does not mean that there isn't a difference. I don't think there is a morally relevant difference between the two; I just don't believe that can be demonstrated by asking "what about one second before that?" over and over. I agree with the conclusion of this pro-life argument, but this isn't a logical way to get to the conclusion.

You might be wondering, "does anyone even make that illogical argument?" The answer is yes. I've heard it from many pro-life people, I've seen it in pro-life blog posts, and I've even seen it in at least one Christian pro-life movie. It's especially common for pro-life people to turn to this argument when they feel stuck, like the argument is a safety net. I don't want to name names or call anyone out, because the pro-life movement doesn't need more division. But we do need to stop making this bad argument.

To finish and share this article, visit EqualRightsInstitute.com/Beard.

Personal Note from Josh

Time for another family update!

We've had the chance to spend a lot of our summer with my parents. My dad Rich is currently receiving treatment for a type of cancer called Mantle Cell Lymphoma. (If you believe in God, please keep him in your prayers.) He's been in California this summer receiving treatment at Stanford's Cancer Center. The blessing about that has been that we get to spend lots of time with him and mom on the weeks between treatment cycles.

Playing with my three sons is a part of my daily life when I get home. I've been teaching Noah (6) to play the guitar lately. That's been really fun. He loves it. After teaching him the basics I found an iPad

app that has a bunch of guitar lessons built into it, and Noah will go and practice for hours! (A much better work ethic than I had with my piano lessons at that age.)

I got to take Noah and William (4) on separate "daddy dates" to a local mini-golf place. That was both fun and sometimes hilarious, as this was William's first time. He loved it though, and we'll definitely have to do that again.

It's been a hectic and sometimes stressful summer. Thank you so much for your prayers and financial support.

Warmly,

~ Josh

